

Remarks

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration of the objection and rejections, and further examination are requested.

The specification and abstract have been reviewed and revised to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. A substitute specification and abstract have been prepared and are submitted herewith. No new matter has been added. Also submitted herewith are marked-up copies of the specification and abstract indicating the changes incorporated therein.

Figures 19 and 20 have been objected to for not being labeled as "Prior Art". Replacement Figures 19 and 20 labeled "Prior Art" are also submitted herewith. No new matter has been added by these changes. As a result, withdrawal of the objection to the drawings is respectfully requested.

Claim 28 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite. Claim 28 has been amended so as to address this rejection. As a result, withdrawal of the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, is respectfully requested.

Further, claims 16, 21, 23 and 24 have been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer to the subject matter contained therein.

In addition, claims 15, 17-20, 22 and 25 have been amended to make a number of editorial revisions thereto. These revisions have been made to place the claims in better U.S. form. None of these amendments have been made to narrow the scope of protection of the claims, or to address issues related to patentability, and therefore, these amendments should not be construed as limiting the scope of equivalents of the claimed features offered by the Doctrine of Equivalents.

Claims 15-17, 19, 20 and 23-27 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Applicant's Admitted Prior Art (AAPA) in view of Udagawa (US 6,967,914). Claim 18 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Udagawa and further in view of Sakamoto (US 5,005,164). Claim 21 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Udagawa and further in view of Yokoi (US 2003/0090981). Claims 22 and 28 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over AAPA in view of Udagawa and further in view of Nagara (US 6,731,584).

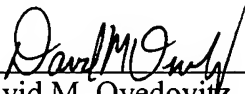
It is noted that all of the above-mentioned rejections rely on Udagawa which is a U.S. Patent based on International Application No. PCT/JP02/05033. It is also noted that International Application No. PCT/JP02/05033 was filed on May 24, 2002, which is after November 29, 2000, and the WIPO publication (WO 02/101734) of the International Application is not in the English language. As a result, Udagawa is not entitled to a §102(e) date. (See MPEP §706.02(f)(1)). Therefore, the earliest effective date of Udagawa is the PCT publication date of December 19, 2002 which is after the present application's priority date of October 28, 2002. An English language translation of priority document JP 2002-312435 and certification statement verifying the accuracy of the translation are submitted herewith. It is submitted that claims 15, 17-20, 22 and 25-28 are supported by the priority document. Therefore, Udagawa can no longer be relied upon as a reference against claims 15, 17-20, 22 and 25-28. As a result, it is apparent that all of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) are moot.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, it submitted that the present application is now in condition for allowance. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone if it is felt that there are issues remaining which must be resolved before allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,

Tomotada KAMEI

By:



David M. Ovedovitz
Registration No. 45,336
Attorney for Applicant

DMO/jmj
Washington, D.C. 20006-1021
Telephone (202) 721-8200
Facsimile (202) 721-8250
October 26, 2006